

you were an easy mark.
I didn't know how to fight
or protect myself. Later,
I would.
And while I thought
Shelia's imaginary friends
were silly, there was at least
one good thing about them:
they didn't make fun of you
for being a slow reader,
and they didn't
hit you
in the face
for no good
reason at
all.

DRIVE HOME

On
Michigan
Avenue, driving
home from
Moloch Insurance,
where I work,
I see an Arab merchant
chase a dreadlocked black man
down the street.
The Arab merchant
swings a baseball bat
at the black man's head.
This happens
on the west side of
Beech-Daly Road, in the city
of Inkster. Across the street
is the Summit Motel, a dive
with daily and weekly rates
where transients, hookers,
and crack-heads live.
Last month,
two gunmen — one fifteen,
the other seventeen — kicked
down a door at the Summit Motel
and killed three people.
The gunmen
had thought there
was a crack dealer
in the room, but it
turned out that they
had kicked down the wrong door.
They shot the occupants anyway.
Several

years before,
at the same motel,
three cops were shot dead
as they had tried
to serve an arrest warrant
on a woman accused of writing
bad checks.

This stretch
of Michigan Avenue between
Beech-Daly and Merriman Roads
is a violent and deadly
hell-hole populated by gangs,
pimps and hookers,
crazies, and the
disenfranchised.

I look
at the Arab man
with his baseball bat,
I see his angry face,
and then I look at
the people in the cars
around me. None
of them look at the Arab
or the black man.

They look
straight ahead.
The religious among them,
I think, pray that they won't
get a flat tire
along this stretch of
Michigan Avenue.

If they do,
I figure,
they will
drive home
on the
rim.

— Kurt Nimmo

Canton MI

DEFINITION OF AN APPLE

Small lipstick sun,
moral mousetrap for Adam and Eve,
health grenade to keep the doctor at bay,
shiny brick used in supermarket pyramids,
low cast housing for worms.